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SOME WOMEN IN PARZIVAL

Two well known scholars are before me in this field. San-Marte in the third book of his "Parzival-Studien" devotes several pages to brief characterizations of the principal female characters in *Parzival*, showing how one seems to be set off against the other, and indirectly crediting Wolfram with much breadth of psychological insight. Kinzel in two articles (ZfdA 30,357; ZfdPh 21,48) adopts a more critical view, notably in the former, and considers Wolfram's women as made up in part of purely novelistic traits, in part true to contemporary life. He aims to show that Wolfram was not able to set down the actual women of his day, being bound by loyalty to his source. Particularly illuminating is his sketch of *Antikonie*, for its keen analysis of Wolfram's words and clear exposition of what they imply.

Both scholars, it seems to me, neglect a manifest opportunity by ignoring Chretien, and taking Wolfram simply as he stands. This is to be sure not inadvertence on their part, but the result of their attitude toward the question of *Kyot*. I do not feel competent, nor is this the place, to discuss that very difficult problem. Suffice it to say that while I am not prepared to deny *Kyot*, I do not feel that a clear case has been made out for him, and shall accordingly go on the assumption that he did not exist.

The object of this paper, then, is to gain by a comparison of Wolfram's women with those of Chretien, so far as they run parallel, an insight into Wolfram's ideas about women and his poetic practice in regard to them.

HERZELOYDE

CHRETIEN

Bliocadrans has lost eleven brothers and thus succeeds to the family inheritance. He has a charming wife (538), who begs her husband not to go jousting (526, 637). He goes, however, just before her impending confinement, and Perceval is born at about

WOLFRAM

(101,25) News comes to Gahmuret that his friend the *baruc* has been attacked; he goes to succor him. Herzeloyde remains at home in general estimation, her heart devoted to Gahmuret, whom she confidently expects after half a year. One midday while sleeping she has a terrifying dream which proves an omen of evil: she has scarcely been awakened by her maid-

the same time that he is slain. The lady is kept in ignorance of his death at first, then an abbot is induced to break the news to her. He does so in a rather long-winded speech, and she faints at the words: *mors est li preudom vostre sire*, and so does not hear the edifying conclusion. The knights of Bliocadrans also faint, and revive to lament with her. She tears her hair, beats her breast, and curses the hour of her birth and conception. She has masses sung for her husband in all the cathedrals. Long she grieves for him, then begins to take comfort in her fine boy.

Seven months the lady remains in the land, until the month of April. She delights in her son, and often wonders how she may keep him from becoming a knight or bearing arms. His death would be followed by her own. She resolves therefore to take him with her into the wilderness and bring him up there apart from the world, hoping thus to keep him with her for life. (970). She discusses the plan with a faithful servant, who suggests a necessary ruse for getting out of the country. (1050). She calls a council and the ruse is successful (1115). The journey described; a good place found and a house built (1206). The boy grows up and is taught riding and spear-throwing. The

ens, because she cried out in her sleep, when men come with the news that Gahmuret has been killed. She falls in a faint. The messengers report sorcery as responsible for Gahmuret's death; the knights are absorbed in the narrative, and forget the queen, till an old man pries her teeth apart and pours water into her mouth, so that she revives. She laments Gahmuret bitterly, but at once thinks of his child, and prays God to let it be born, that something of her husband be left to her. "It were a second death to him," she says, "were I to strike myself while I hold within me the fruit of his love." (110, 22) With pleasure she discovers that she will be able to nurse the child herself. Two weeks later she is delivered of so large a boy that she barely recovers; she rejoices over him, kisses him many times, and delights in nursing him. She both sighs and smiles upon the child. (114,3)

Few people, whether men or women, would in their youth give up the riches of this world for the sake of heaven. Yet this is what Herzeloide does in giving up her three kingdoms and withdrawing to the desert of Soltane. Nor is it to enjoy the beauties of nature, but for the sake of her child. She forbids her retinue to mention the word knight; and Parzival is brought up wholly without knightly accomplishment, unless it be that he learns to cast the javelin. With it he slays many birds, and then weeps over them; also he weeps at the beauty of their song, but cannot tell his mother the reason. She finds it out, however, and gives orders to kill the birds. The boy asks why she has done so, and she sees the wrong she was doing, and reminds herself that God created the birds. The boy then asks about God, and she instructs him as to the attributes of God and the devil, namely light and darkness. (119,30) He is very skillful with

lady tells her son nothing of name or family. One day she warns him against men in shining armor, who she says are devils that will devour him. The next day he goes out to hunt but finds no game. Later he goes out again, and encounters some knights. When he tells his mother this, she faints, then pours forth an impassioned harangue of 82 lines, which the boy does not heed. She keeps him only three days longer, while she makes him some rude clothing. She gives him advice: to succor the fair, seek their favors, ask every stranger's name, and visit church. He asks what church is, and she explains the Christian faith, briefly. He leaves in a hurry, but turns at the distance of a stone's throw to see his mother fallen at the draw-bridge. He goes on however.

his javelins. One day he sees knights passing and converses with them; then hurries home and tells his mother, whereupon she falls in a faint. She discovers the truth, and sees that she can no longer keep him; so she makes fool's clothing for him, hoping that he will be ill-treated and return to her. She gives him advice: to avoid by-ways, heed the advice of aged men, seek ladies' gifts and favors; then tells him of the lands that should be his. Early the next morning he rides away. Herzeloyde in her anguish runs after him a little distance, then falls broken-hearted as he rides out of sight. Wolfram commends the unswerving loyalty that has distinguished her from other women.

Whatever may be said of that part of the story of Herzeloyde which is not found in Chretien, there can be no doubt of the greater charm and veracity of Wolfram's figure as far as they are parallel. Both poets make the affectionate consort fall in a faint at the news of her husband's death; but how much more dignified and sweet is Herzeloyde, as she seeks consolation in her babe for the loss sustained! The extravagant grief of the other, as she curses and beats herself, seems to us less genuine; and it would almost appear as if Wolfram had this in mind when he makes Herzeloyde explain why she does not take on in a similar manner. He makes clear to us the transformation of the ardent young wife into the mother whom no earthly pleasures can allure; yet it is not that her heart has grown cold, simply she has renounced the world for the sake of her child.

Again, realizing the shock it must be to her when Parzival tells of the knights he has seen, the long speech that Chretien puts into her mouth seems inappropriate and tedious; and Wolfram in a few words achieves the end for which Chretien strove, and does it much better. Her advice, too, is more appropriate and saner in Wolfram. And when Parzival rides away, it is a fine touch of insight to make her run after him.

Is it giving Wolfram credit for too much depth to suggest that he purposely contrasts the two halves of Herzeloide's story? Certainly the queen who claims Gahmuret's love against his outspoken will, who forgets all maidenly modesty in the ardor of her affection, is not the woman who retires to the wilderness. In this connection it may be significant that Wolfram has no praise for her till after she is married to Gahmuret.

Aside from the improved characterization of Herzeloide, there are important differences of other kinds between the two narratives. Wolfram's story improves on the French at almost every point: in keeping the child unborn until after Gahmuret's death, in dropping the silly deception practised upon the bereaved wife, and so avoiding the trivial abbot-episode, in striking out the detailed and prosy account of Herzeloide's departure from her country, in introducing more naturally the instruction about God which the lad receives from his mother, and in curtailing the conversation between him and the knights—in all these matters Wolfram condenses the story and at the same time makes it more vivid. Questionable is also Perceval's turning to see his mother fall, without going back to her: Wolfram avoids this difficulty by making him ride off without turning back, more characteristic of a scatter-brained youth.

JESCHUTE

CHRETIEN

Perceval (1830) comes at early morn, after a night in the forest, to a tent in a beautiful plain, through which a stream flows. The tent is red and green, with gold bands and a gilded eagle above it.

WOLFRAM

(120,14) Parzival spends the night in the forest, then comes to a handsome tent of three colors, with a rain-guard. The wife of Duke Orilus is asleep within. She is very beautiful, and her parted red lips show her white teeth; she has pushed aside the coverlet, and

Perceval takes it for a church and enters to find a lone damsel asleep. His horse neighs and wakes her; she trembles with fear, but not for herself; she is apprehensive of his death if her lover returns to find him, whom she thinks mad. He kisses her some twenty times against her will, and pulls a ring off her finger; she weeps as she begs him not to take it from her, lest she be abused and he slain. He pays no heed, eats and drinks what he finds, and finally goes off, bidding her farewell. But she will not return his salutation, weeping with apprehension. Her lover returns, rendered suspicious by the hoof prints outside the tent. He questions her sharply; and when she finally confesses that Perceval has kissed her, he bursts into a storm of jealous rage, and swears to give her horse no food and her no extra raiment; if the horse dies, she must follow on foot. This is to continue until the supposed lover is slain. (2024)

(4865) Perceval sees a wretched palfrey coming along the path. It bears a damsel whose garments are fairly dropping off (details!). The tears stream down her face, as she tries in vain to conceal her nakedness at sight of Perceval. She laments her evil case (25 lines), apparently to nobody, but he hears the lament, and salutes her compassionately, but without recognizing her. She resents the

he sees a ring on her hand. Remembering his mother's counsel, he goes to take the ring, and wakens her to alarm and rebuke. He kisses her and takes the ring and a brooch at her throat. He complains of hunger and she points out food to him, which he calmly devours. She thinks he is mad, and his stay in the tent seems very long to her. She begs him to leave her the ring and brooch; her husband may come and do him harm. He is not alarmed, but goes lest she be compromised, kissing her however again and bidding her farewell. Orilus comes and at once accuses Jeschute of unfaithfulness, having seen the hoof-prints on the dewy grass. She admits Parzival's great beauty, but scouts the notion that she would grant favor to one of such lowly birth. Orilus is incredulous, reminds her at great length of his merits and knightly prowess, rebukes her for her wrong to him, and announces her punishment, not wishing to beat her as many a knight would have done: she shall no longer share his bed and board, shall have no change of clothing, shall have a rude bridle and saddle, and her horse shall hunger. She begs for mercy, but he is inexorable. They ride away, and she is consumed with pain, not for herself, but because of his grief; she had rather be dead.

(256,14) Parzival catches up with a starved nag which bears a sad and miserably clad lady, who is beautiful in spite of it. He greets her and she recognizes him and reproaches him as being to blame for her present misfortune; as he asseverates his innocence, and looks compassionately upon her, she becomes aware of her nakedness, and tries to hide it. Parzival offers her his cloak, but she merely begs him to ride away, lest they both be slain; she would not be sorry for her death, but for his.

greeting, as being unworthy of it. She bids him flee to save himself from being slain by *li Orguellous de la lande*. The latter comes and relates at great length the cause of his punishment of the damsel. Perceval reveals his identity; a furious conflict ensues, while the damsel trembles with fear and by her presence stimulates both to the highest effort. At length Orguellous cries for mercy. Perceval swears to his innocence of the supposed wrong, and bids Orguellous restore the damsel to favor and go to Arthur's court. Orguellous bathes his loved one and dresses her in fresh robes, so that her beauty is restored, and her happiness as well.

He is loath to flee, and makes ready for combat. Orilus comes and they fight furiously, while Jeschute wrings her hands, desiring the death of neither knight. Orilus drops his sword and clasps Parzival, but the latter squeezes him until the blood bursts out of his nose. Orilus is reluctant to take Jeschute back into favor, but is forced to do so, and when Parzival goes with them to the cell of Trevrizent and swears a solemn oath that Jeschute is guiltless, Orilus is overjoyed and the reconciliation is complete. As Jeschute lies again beside her husband, she weeps for joy; she is bathed and richly dressed, and as they sit together at their bedside and eat rare viands, Orilus takes pleasure in kissing her.

Again Wolfram takes the outlines furnished by Chretien, and fills them in with greater wealth of detail, greater consistency, and even greater accuracy of insight. Jeschute, as San-Marte points out, is the type of the submissive, patient wife; but her affections are all for Orilus. Chretien overdoes her solicitude for Perceval at the first meeting; Wolfram is shrewder and makes her give him but one warning, which might almost be a threat. Again, her tears flow too freely at first with Chretien: she is much more likely to have been astonished and indignant, as with Wolfram. Chretien makes her confess to having been kissed; Wolfram sees that that is both unnatural and unnecessary, and motivates the scene much more naturally through Orilus's observation of the hoof-prints outside the tent. Chretien leaves the first episode with Orguellous's jealous rage: Wolfram puts into Jeschute's mouth a touching and womanly plea for mercy, and then shows her mourning less her own ill-treatment than the grief of her husband, thus exhibiting in a more natural way the self-forgetfulness of this loving wife. Still more important, Wolfram changes materially the punishment meted out to

Jeschute. He perceived clearly that such a woman would not grieve at material hardship: the real punishment for her was her husband's displeasure. Orilus first announces her exclusion from his bed, and upon this she makes her plea for mercy: only in his second speech does he mention her horse, clothing, etc. In the second part also there are marked alterations. In place of that most improbable long lament, addressed to no one in particular, but nicely timed with Parzival's approach, and Jeschute's rudeness in replying to his salutation, Wolfram makes her recognize Parzival, as she probably would, and blame him for her unhappiness. This avoids the tiresome and absurd speech of explanation which Chrestien's Orguellous makes to Perceval. It is more natural, too, that in her surprise at recognizing Parzival she should forget for the moment her tattered raiment, and only be reminded of it by his looks. In the combat Wolfram scores a point by making her desire the death of neither knight. And in the sequel, when she is reconciled with her husband again, her tears of joy are another attractive addition by Wolfram, illuminating wonderfully a most charming personality.

Interesting on the narrative side is the omission of a lengthy episode inserted by Chretien into the midst of the combat between Perceval and Orguellous. The King of the Grail has given Perceval an enchanted sword, which has the pleasant quality of bursting into pieces when the first blow is struck with it. Fortunately, Perceval has his own sword buckled on, so he throws the pieces down, and fights on with his old one. Now the King of the Grail remembers the sword and its qualities, and sends a page after it. He picks up the pieces unnoticed by either damsel or knights, and makes off with it. Nothing further is heard of it. The episode is perfectly useless, and merely hinders the action. One wonders on the other hand, how Wolfram, with his keen sense of fitness, could let Orilus make his long speech of self-glorification; but he offset this decided weakness by dropping the long speech of explanation in the second part, and by the addition of Parzival's oath in the hermit cell, a most solemn and striking scene, indeed almost dramatic.

CONDWIRAMURS

CHRETIEN

Perceval comes into the palace and sees the maiden there (2980); she is very beautiful and finely robed. Lengthy description of her. She takes him by the hand and leads him to her own apartments, where she sits beside him. He utters no word at first, which surprises the others in the room. At length she begins the conversation and asks him whence he comes. It appears that he has been at her uncle's castle. They dine and retire for the night. (3130) Perceval promptly goes to sleep, being without cares or anxieties; but Blancheflours is wakeful, tossing restlessly in anxious thought. At length she arises, throws a cloak over her nightdress and sets out to seek Perceval and tell him her troubles; no spirit of wickedness or folly moves her. She is terrified, her limbs trembling, her body perspiring. She puts an arm about Perceval's neck and her sobs and tears waken him; he is much astonished, but puts his arms around her and asks what is wrong. She begs him not to think her vile to come to him so lightly clad; she is very wretched, because her best men have been captured or imprisoned, and her people are starving. On the morrow her castle must be surrendered, but she will kill herself rather than wed Clamadex, and she is keeping a fine steel knife for that purpose. Her words put courage into Perceval's heart, and he resolves to fight for her on the morrow. Meanwhile he bids her be comforted, and to that end takes her into his arms and kisses her tears away. Thus

WOLFRAM

Parzival is invited to see the queen (186,11), and goes into the palace. Her uncles lead her to him, and she kisses him, then leads him by the hand to a seat. She is very beautiful, and at once makes a deep impression on him. Mindful of Gurnemanz's advice not to ask too many questions, he sits in silence beside the queen. At first she thinks he is scorning her, then sees the kindness of his look, and resolves to speak first herself, thinking this may be her duty as hostess. She asks whence he has come, and learns that it was from her uncle's. They have a slender meal, then go to bed. He sleeps promptly; but Condwiramurs is wakeful, and finally throws a cloak over her nightdress and goes softly to Parzival's bed, lighted as bright as day by many candles. No thought of sinful love is in her mind, but she needs help and counsel. She trembles with fear lest he should not respect her. She kneels before his bed weeping, and her tears falling on him waken him. He raises himself and protests at her kneeling before him, begging her to sit at his side, or else to take his place in the bed. She lies down beside him on condition that he will respect her, and tells him of her troubles, half her men killed, and she about ready to kill herself rather than consent to become Clamide's wife. He asks if he can do

they sleep side by side until morning. (3261) At daybreak she returns to her chamber and dresses without assistance, and then repairs to her knight and gaily bids him good day. Then she urges him to leave her castle and go somewhere to find better hospitality. This ruse, if it is one, succeeds in strengthening Perceval's resolution to fight for her, and he declares himself accordingly, desiring only her love as guerdon in case of victory.

She dissembles (as Chrestien admits): "You demand much in return for little; do not bid me become your beloved because you are going out to die for me: that were too great a loss. For you can do nothing against so strong and large and fierce a knight as yonder warrior." "That shall appear to-day," he replies; and she is secretly pleased at the firmness which she has ostensibly tried to shake, as often happens. (3329) Perceval overcomes Guigeron the seneschal and sends him to Arthur, then returns to the castle. They grumble that Guigeron is not slain, but Blancheflours leads Perceval to her chamber and yields herself unservedly to him. (3538) Clamadex learns the evil tidings. A vessel of provisions relieves the famine. Clamadex sends a challenge to Perceval, realizing the futility of a siege. All beg him not to accept, and Blancheflours especially, kissing him at every word; but all in vain. (3816) He overcomes Clamadex and sends him also to Arthur's court. (4087) Perceval remembers his mother and leaves Blancheflours to go to see what has become of her. Blancheflours is very sad. (4115)

anything, and she says she would be relieved to be freed from Kingrune. He promises to aid her. She thanks him and goes back to her chamber; but sees him before he goes out to battle. He overthrows Kingrune and sends him to Arthur. The queen embraces him on his return, helps him disarm, and vows to marry none but him. The citizens swear fealty to him and beg him to be their master. A provision ship comes and relieves the famine. Parzival and the queen share the nuptial couch; but for two nights he leaves her virgin. None the less she does her hair like a wife. Clamide learns of Kingrune's defeat. He advances to the assault, but it is repulsed by the citizens with Parzival at their head. Clamide then sends a challenge to him, which he accepts joyfully; Clamide is overthrown and barely saves his life. He too is sent to Arthur. For a short time Parzival and Condwiramurs enjoy the highest happiness. Then he desires to see how his mother is, and to seek adventure, and she, unable to refuse him anything, bids him farewell. (223,30).

In discussing this episode, it is necessary to distinguish sharply between the poet and his characters. There is no question that Wolfram has a strong bent toward the sensual, and that he enjoys dwelling on sexual matters. And it is evident that the piquancy of the situation afforded by a maiden queen seeking the couch of a visitor at night appeals more strongly to him than to Chretien. Wolfram throws in several jocular remarks for the delectation of his audience, with his tongue in his cheek. He says, *was möhte kampfficher sîn, dan gein dem man sus komende ein wîp?* and again, *ober si hin an iht nem? leider des enkan er niht.*

On the other hand, the Middle Ages produced no keener judge of human nature than Wolfram, and he knows perfectly what is proper and becoming, and what is natural. Condwiramurs, to be a fit spouse for his spiritually exalted hero, must be a model of her sex, must be a woman of fine sensibility and pure heart. And Wolfram makes her so, by a series of notable alterations, additions, and omissions. If we fix our attention here not so much on what Wolfram says as on what he makes his people say and do, we cannot but confess that he has ennobled to a remarkable degree a very ordinary romantic adventure.

The two men start their scene in a very similar manner, the only marked difference being that Wolfram at once paves the way for the love of the couple, by making the queen kiss her guest, and by keeping his discussion of her beauty until after Parzival is seated beside her. We note also how he explains Parzival's silence toward the queen; and the process of reflection by which she arrives at her resolve to open the conversation reveals a fine, straightforward, womanly nature.

The scene at night is full of neat little touches of insight. Wolfram is so anxious to set his heroine in the proper light that he first tells his audience not to misjudge her, then tells what she does. The mention of the candles about Parzival's bed makes the visit less objectionable. When the queen reaches the bed, she simply kneels at it and weeps, not touching Parzival; and when he wakens, he is (naturally) surprised and startled. He raises himself up (as a mark of deference), and his first thought is that she is kneeling before him. He does

not touch her, and she does not expect it. She on the other hand is not the sophisticated beauty that Chretien knows. A truly modest woman would not think of mentioning her scanty attire, or of anxiously forestalling a misjudgement of her conduct; conscious of her pure motives, she would not imagine that another could doubt them. She might on the other hand fear lest a stranger would not give her the respect she deserved, hence her timidity as she kneels before Parzival, and her anxious stipulation before sharing his couch. In both poems she is made to lie at the side of her guest; but with what a difference! In Chretien Perceval takes her into his arms after she has told her story, when there is no further excuse for her staying at all; and the poet assures us that she does not object to Perceval's kisses. In Wolfram she lies at Parzival's side simply because he feels it unbecoming for her to kneel before him; they do not kiss, and she leaves as soon as her story is told. Wolfram convinces us that she really means what she says in vowing never to marry Clamide; Chretien, in spite of the knife he makes her keep secreted, leaves us with a feeling that she would never use it.

Still more fundamental are the further omissions of Wolfram's account. Parzival has promised to aid her, and in the morning she is content merely to see him before he goes forth to battle. Not so Chretien's heroine. She is sly and sophisticated, she does not trust the stranger, and wishes to test his fidelity. Accordingly she goes to him and hypocritically urges him to leave her castle, where he cannot be entertained handsomely; when he still remains ready to fight for her, she tests him again by insinuating that he cannot manage the enemy he has to face.

Significant is also Wolfram's manner of treating their union. Chretien makes his heroine take Perceval off to her chamber after the first combat, where they (supposedly) consummate the marriage on the spot. Thus their marriage is not more solemn than any ordinary love affair. Wolfram, on the other hand, takes the matter more seriously. Condwiramurs is not a modern heroine: after the combat she embraces Parzival warmly and chooses him as husband. But her subjects pass on her choice; and the couple signify their inten-

tion of getting married according to a time-honored custom (201,19). Here again Wolfram enjoys a piquant situation, but turns it to account in his own fashion. If it is characteristic of the inexperienced Parzival that he does not at once claim the husband's prerogative, it is evidence of the queen's pure womanhood that she is content to have it so.

Overdone and unnatural seem also the extravagant demonstrations with which Perceval is begged not to fight Clamadox. Of this there is nothing in Wolfram. Apart from the confidence which the queen must have in his prowess, it was simply a matter of course that he should accept a challenge; indeed, he could not refuse it and keep his self-respect. And when Parzival begs leave to go, Wolfram's conclusion seems ever so much more touching: *er was ir liep, so'z maere giht: sine wolde im versagen niht*. No need then to say that she grieved at his departure.

SIGUNE seems to have touched Wolfram's imagination more deeply than any of his other women. She is the heroine of the *Titurel*, and appears in that poem as one of his most successful delineations; also she appears on three separate occasions in Parzival. Chretien's account of her is quite meagre. As Perceval rides away on the morning after the night spent in the Castle of the Grail, he suddenly sees a damsel under an oak, (4608) weeping and wailing and speaking wildly, like one in sorrow and wretchedness. She curses the hour of her conception and birth, wishes for her own death, cares neither for body or soul, since her best beloved lies dead in her lap, his head split in twain. Perceval greets her and she returns his salutation with bowed head. She says in reply to a question, "Fair sir, a knight slew him this morning; but I marvel greatly at something I notice." This something is the fresh appearance of Perceval and his horse, since she knows there is no dwelling-place within a good five leagues; she wonders how he comes to be there. Perceval tells her of his recent adventure and she recognizes from his description the Castle of the Grail, gives him a long account of king and castle, learns from him of his omitted question, also his name, and turns to reproach him, naming him as her cousin and telling him of his mother's death. Perceval urges her to go with

him and leave the corpse, but she refuses, and points out the path which the slayer took. She inquires about the sword he wears (see comments on the story of Jeschute) and warns him against it, also telling him where to have it mended if it breaks. He leaves her. (4865).

There are several questionable features about this episode. In the first place the grief of the maiden is again too shrill: this indiscriminate cursing, as in the case of Herzeloyde, is both undignified and unconvincing. But what shall we think of a damsel who is in such a state of mind, who cares nothing for body or soul, who is in a perfect frenzy of grief, yet who can note accurately the appearance of Perceval and his horse, can deal in two lines with the death of her lover, and devote the entire remainder of a rather long speech to wonderment about this stranger, who ought to be nothing at all to her; and who can go into detail about his sword and forget all about her knight until reminded of him by the stranger's proposal that she go with him? Chretien again has the central idea: that of a maiden devoted body and soul to a loved one, and ready to give up all worldly pleasure now that he is lost to her. But it takes Wolfram to clothe this idea in convincing forms.

In *Parzival*, Sigune is first encountered just after the lad has left Jeschute in tears. (138,9) He finds her sitting before a cliff weeping and wailing loudly, and tearing her long brown hair; she holds a dead knight in her lap. *Parzival* has been bidden by his mother to greet every one, so he rides up and gives her salutation, and asks in his blundering way about the knight. Sigune does not answer (doubtless wrapped up in her grief). He is unabashed and asks who has slain the knight, offering to fight him for her. This arouses the sorrowing damsel, and she thanks him for his solicitude. Now she has had her attention called to him, she is moved to ask him his name. He knows none, but she recognizes him and calls his name, going on then to tell him of his birth and lineage, which is all new to him. She is his cousin. Now she tells him also how her knight has met his death: pursuing a hound for the sake of a remarkable collar which it wore. She laments bitterly having refused the knight her love, and has nothing left

but to love his corpse. He says a few words of sympathy and rides away. After he has left the Castle of the Grail he encounters her again (249,11), holding the embalmed body of her knight in her lap, and still lamenting over it. He does not recognize her, and approaches her with offers of assistance. She inquires whence he has come, knowing this to be a dangerous wilderness, and bids him leave it. He speaks of a castle, and she mentions the castle of the Grail and its King Anfortas. She is pleased to think that Parzival may have freed Anfortas from his torment; for she has recognized his voice. She tells him who she is, and he looks at her in wonder: she has pulled out all her hair and has lost all color and strength. He urges her to bury the corpse, whereat she weeps. Then however she returns to the question about the Grail, saying that it would give her joy if Anfortas were now cured; and in this connection she notes Parzival's sword and tells him about it. He admits that he asked no question, and she cries out upon him with cursing, and refuses to speak another word, so that he is forced to leave her. Yet once more Parzival is to see Sigune. (435) At the opening of the ninth book, after many and long wanderings on land and sea, Parzival comes to a little cell in the forest. In it dwells Sigune, her knight being buried in the ground beneath; she has renounced the world for the love of God. She never goes to church, but her whole life is a prayer; she wears a hair shirt beneath a gray dress, and is so pale and worn that he again fails to recognize her. He rides up to the cell, and is ashamed, when he hears a woman's voice answer his call, that he has not dismounted. He ties up his horse and takes off his shield, then approaches the window of the cell to converse with its inmate. She wears a ring on her hand, which he notices. She tells him that she is supplied with food from the Grail, brought her by Cundrie. He thinks she is deceiving him, and asks her about the ring she wears; she replies mildly, telling him how she has come to live in solitude, wife before God of a knight whom she loved but would not wed until it was too late, wearing the ring now as a symbol of this mystic marriage. Parzival now recognizes her, and uncovers his face so that she knows him also; she asks at once about the Grail, and he replies in humility and sorrow

that he is still seeking it. She gives him advice, withdrawing her curse upon him, and he rides away.

Comment is almost unnecessary here; but it may be noted how admirably Sigune's undying grief for the lost love is brought out by the device of having her meet Parzival three times. Exaggerated as the picture is, there is nothing intrinsically improbable in it; and the character of Sigune is surely consistent.

OBIE AND OBILOT

CHRETIEN

(6334) The women climb the battlements to see the tournament, and catch sight of Gawein under the tree. The two daughters of Tiebaut join them. The elder boasts of *Melians de lis* as the best knight of them all. Her sister remarks that there are better; she is about to strike her, but the others restrain her, to her further wrath. The tournament commences and Melians is foremost; Obie again sounds his praises. Obilot says calmly, "I see handsomer and better." Obie turns upon her with a gust of furious words and strikes her so that the finger-marks are visible on her cheek. The other ladies separate and censure them. They fall to speaking of Gawein and call him a merchant, since he has not taken part in the tournament. Obilot calls attention to his spears, and asserts stoutly his knight-hood. Gawein is put out at the talk, but is determined not to fight. At evening he enters the castle and seeks lodging with a vassal of Tiebaut. (6588) Obie is incensed with her sister, and tells her father

WOLFRAM

(345,26) Gawan meets a squire on the road who tells him about Obie and Obilot, daughters of Lyppaut. Obie is loved by Meljanz the king, but has refused his suit on the ground that he has not earned her love as yet. Enraged, he besieges Lyppaut. Gawan is curious to see something of the affair, and rides to the place, but is resolved to take no part in the conflict. He passes the tents on the field and would enter the town, but the gates are too well guarded, so he rides up the hill toward the castle. Obie takes him for a merchant at first, but Obilot is sure he is a knight, and vows to choose him for her knight. He rests under a tree. Obilot censures her sister for her overweening pride in refusing Meljanz, but the latter is provoked and insists that Gawan is no knight. Meljanz is victorious in the tournament, while Gawan sits under the tree. Obie remarks that her knight shows greater prowess than her sister's. Soon she sends a page to ask Gawan if he has horses to sell; he is however scared speechless by Gawan's mere look. Then Obie sends the chief burgess of the city to take Gawan's horses from him, asserting that he is no knight. Scherules the burgess comes to Gawan, but perceives his quality and invites him to his own dwelling. Gawan accepts. Obie makes a third attempt, by sending a message to Lyp-

of this stranger, whom she calls a merchant masquerading as a knight to secure free passage. Thus she tries to put shame on him on her sister's account. When the latter sees Tiebaut mount and ride off to Gawein, she runs out and gets there first by short-cuts. The host enters (does he learn the danger from Obilot?) and sets out to meet Tiebaut, who is introduced to Gawein. They talk and bid each other farewell. Now the little maid comes forward, clasps Gawein by the leg and demands justice against her sister, who has beaten her. Tiebaut excuses her on the ground of extreme youth, but Gawein listens to her plea, that he enter the tournament on the morrow for love of her. Gawein asks whether she has ever made needless request of a knight and promises to grant hers. Tiebaut carries off the little girl on his crupper and demands the story, which she tells with delicious artlessness, expressing the hope that Gawein will overthrow Melians and so requite Obie for the blows given Obilot. Obie meets father and daughter with shrewish words, but Tiebaut reproves her severely, leaving her much discomfited. Tiebaut takes out a crimson satin robe, cuts off a sleeve from it, and bids Obilot take it to Gawein on the morrow, to wear as love-token in the tournament. She bids her maidens not to let her sleep too long in the morning, but to waken

paut urging him to apprehend Gawan. But Scherules meets him half way and assures him that he has been deceived; Lyppaut rides on with him to see Gawan. (Wolfram inserts at this point an explanation of Obie's perversity: she is deeply in love with Meljanz, and her refusal of him has grieved her so that she is more easily irritated. "Blame her not," he says.) Lyppaut begs Gawan's aid, but the latter will not commit himself. As Lyppaut goes out he finds Obilot playing in the yard with the burgess' daughter Clauditte. At her father's question Obilot says that she has come to see the stranger and ask him to be her knight. Gawan thanks her for taking his part against her sister (he has overheard the conversation about himself), and sits down beside her as if she were a grown maiden. She prefers her request in a rather lengthy address, and he grants it willingly. Wolfram puts some philosophizing into the mouths of both. Clauditte asks her what she will give him as token, and offers one of her dolls! Lyppaut is waiting for her: he takes her on his horse, and his men all want to take Clauditte. Obilot tells him that she has no gift for her knight. Lyppaut's spouse gives her daughter a handsome robe, the sleeve of which is carried to Gawan by Clauditte. (375,25) Gawan is victorious, (390) He takes the sleeve from his shield and sends it by Clauditte to Obilot, who joyfully puts it on and parades it before her sister, who is angry. Gawan sends word to Obilot through Scherules that he would fain see her. He, with Meljanz and the other prisoners, goes to Lyppaut's palace; both are kissed by the duchess, but Meljanz will not be kissed by Obie. Gawan lifts Obilot like a doll to his breast, then turns to see Meljanz and bids him obey her command. Obilot at once turns him

her at break of day. They do so and she goes alone to Gawein and gives him the sleeve. He is victorious. Obilot says to Obie, "Now you see what I told you yesterday, there are others that are worth more." Obie answers furiously, and they nearly come to blows, but are separated by the other ladies. Obilot is waiting for Gawein on his return from the tournament, and thanks him. There is great rejoicing when he reveals his identity, but he will not stay. The little maid kisses his feet, and commends him to God, that he may remember her. (7030)

over to her sister Obie. The latter, weeping, puts forth her hand, takes Meljanz's arm, and kisses the spot where Gawan's spear pierced it. Lyp-paut is overjoyed. They are married. But Gawan must hasten away. Obilot weeps bitterly, and begs him to take her with him; with difficulty can her mother unclasp her arms from him.

The Obie-Obilot episode affords an unusually interesting example of Wolfram's principles and methods. For the first time we have to report a relative failure as compared with Chretien. It is hard to imagine a more delightful, charming, darling little maid than the younger daughter of Tiebaut in Chretien's poem. From the moment when she first appears, stoutly opposing her sister about Melianz, to the last view of her, kissing Gawein's foot to make him remember her, she is in her way quite perfect. Wolfram could not have improved on her, and he does not. In fact, it must be admitted that her conversation with Gawan is not appropriate to her age or character; into her mouth are put worldly-wise utterances quite out of keeping with the rest of her story. This is however the only actual blunder in her case. And if we miss the childish eagerness which bids the maids to waken her early in the morning so that she may go to Gawein (Wolfram has the token carried to Gawan by Clauditte), we must admit that the visit which Chretien has her make all alone is somewhat questionable for her age and rank. Other neat points Wolfram does not fail to make. When Lyp-paut finds her in the courtyard, she is playing *vingerlin snaln* with Clauditte; when Gawan sends her the torn sleeve, she puts it on and takes pains to make her sister see it; and when Gawan is going away, she

begs, like the child she is, to go with him. This final scene recompenses somewhat for her precocious speeches to Gawan.

But if Wolfram has not improved on the child, what a woman he has made out of her sister! In Chretien what do we find? A shrill, ill-tempered shrew, without a single redeeming feature. Not a kind word does she speak, and many unkind and harsh ones; thrice in this short episode she raises her hand against her little sister, striking her viciously once; her attempt to discredit Gawein is pure malice against the little one; and she cannot even bear to see her father caressing her sister without a gust of jealousy and spite. In short, Chretien simply furnishes a foil for the charming child, a mere lay-figure for his romance.

Wolfram is not content with this: he thinks too highly of womanhood to let such a figure stand. First he introduces us to her through the mouth of the squire on the road, so that we know she has loved Meljanz, and has refused him not for lack of love, but through a (perhaps mistaken but comprehensible) exaggerated self-esteem. He leads us to think that it is the virgin in her which is responsible for the quarrel, and this is certainly not improbable. She not only does not strike her sister, but does not even threaten to do so; yet she does get angry, and this again keeps her human. Her attempts to discredit Gawan must be retained: the dramatic effort of these scenes is too alluring to be lightly thrown away. But it is differently motivated. Instead of attacking him because she hates her sister, she does so because she is out of sorts generally. Her savage attack on her sister, as she comes riding home with the father, is wholly omitted, and we do not see her again until the final scene. This scene is a masterpiece of insight and truth: the real woman in her comes to the surface when she sees the man she loves wounded for her folly; her resistance and pride are broken down and humbled; with tears of contrition and love she gropes for the bandaged arm and kisses it. Thus we see a really noble woman developed by Wolfram out of a mere shrew, yet without the sacrifice of a single bit of by-play or interest.

ANTIKONIE

CHRETIEN

(7168) Gawein is led by the hand into the damsel's presence. He conveys her brother's greetings and she welcomes him kindly. They are left alone, at which neither is distressed, for she is distinguished in manner and of great beauty, and he is handsome and courteous. They speak of love; Gawein seeks her favor and she agrees without hesitation (7209). As they are kissing amorously, a vassal enters who knows Gawein. He bursts out into a long invective against her, for harboring her father's slayer. She falls in a faint, and thinks only of his danger when she awakes. She runs to find arms for him, but can find no shield. She takes a heavy chess-board. (7271) Vassals and neighbors gather for an attack. She is hardy and ready to aid him. She pours out a torrent of execration on the attackers, justifying her conduct: she had kissed Gawein simply for her brother's sake. When they attack, she hurls the heavy chess-men upon their heads. The lord of the castle returns to find the battle raging. He ends it, but does not encourage Gawein to remain. But he demands of him either the Bleeding Lance within a year, or else his person for imprisonment. Gawein agrees and sets out without his men, to their great distress. He takes leave of the damsel. (7579).

WOLFRAM

(404,21) Gawan is led to Antikonie, who is very fair. The messenger gives her brother's message. She bids Gawan draw nearer, and offers to kiss him, if he desires it. Gawan is impressionable, and her voluptuous beauty has struck him at once. He replies that her mouth is *Küssenlich getân*, and they kiss more like lovers than strangers. Gawan, emboldened, seeks her favor. She refuses, not knowing who he is. While they talk, her women leave the room. Gawan seizes the opportunity to force her to do his will; but to tell the truth she is not disinclined. Here an old knight enters, cries out upon Gawan, who has slain the father and would now deflower his daughter, and goes out to give the alarm. Gawan asks her advice, for he has no weapons by him. They withdraw to a tower. She begs the people to desist from hostilities, but they do not heed her. Gawan takes a heavy door-bolt for weapon; Antikonie hunts in the tower and brings him a chess-board as shield. She uses the chess-men as weapons, and hurls them at the attackers, weeping as she does so. Gawan looks at her from time to time, and her beauty gives him new courage for battle, so that many are slain. The king comes and like a caitiff urges his people on to fight, and even goes to arm and take part himself. But his vassal and chief bürgess joins Gawan and vows to lay down his life ere Gawan shall be slain. The attackers lose courage at this, and remonstrate to the king when he bids them slay both men; they remind him that his sister stands weeping beside Gawan, and that he had sent him to her.

Antikonie kisses the faithful burgess, who is her relative, then turns in wrath and scorn upon her brother the king, who is greatly ashamed. But some counsel to slay Gawan. Kynggrimursel the burgess opposes and pledges Gawan to meet him after a year in battle. Antikonie then leads both away and converses with them till night-fall, when she serves them with her own hand. On the next day a general reconciliation is effected, Gawan promising to seek the Holy Grail for the king, which the Red Knight had commanded him to seek. Antikonie addresses kind words to her brother. Gawan takes leave of her, and she weeps at his departure, and kisses him. Both are grieved.

The Antikonie episode is one which does not appeal to our modern taste, and one can scarcely think that it represented any actual conditions of Wolfram's own day. But we cannot condemn off-hand both Gawan and Antikonie, and accuse Wolfram of grossness. It is essential to compare Wolfram with his source. Chretien makes Gawein, an utter stranger, enter a castle, make love to its mistress, and succeed in his suit; all within 18 lines! This is of course absurd. Wolfram cannot throw out the entire adventure, and perhaps does not wish to do so; but he can at least make the affair more plausible, by working it out a little more in detail. Accordingly he reminds us of the extraordinary charm of Antikonie before he takes Gawan to the castle, comparing her to a well-known figure of his own country. He reminds us of it again after Gawan sees her, thus indicating the powerful impression which she makes on him. Then he makes effective use of the kiss of salutation, which she has offered merely as a matter of politeness. Gawan, easily inflamed, turns this formal kiss, first by his remark about Antikonie's mouth, then by the way in which he takes it, into a declaration of love. This he then follows up by an outspoken verbal declaration. Thus Wolfram really shows us step by step how Gawan is seized by a sudden passion for this charming and beautiful woman. But how about her? Chretien makes her yield without the least hesitation. Not so Wolfram. A virtuous woman, and Antikonie is that, is not so ready to give her love. She objects, temporizes, puts Gawan off. But he has the man's advantage of

strength, and is about to employ it when he is discovered; his very boldness has captivated her, and her scruples were gone in a moment of unreasoning passion. This is the account given us by Wolfram; if not wholly probable or attractive, it is at least a vast improvement over Chretien.

There are other improvements also. The long speech by the man who discovers the lovers is wholly out of place; and still more so his violent attack upon the damsel, as if she could have known who Gawain is, or as if Gawain were not the only really guilty party. Wolfram is much better in this. Her swoon is quite silly and pointless in Chretien, another example of his way of overdoing things. She is not in love with Gawain to such an extent as that. Again, Wolfram makes Gawan seek aid of her, instead of having her offer it first. And with sure insight he omits entirely her long tirade against the attackers, which is both pointless,—since they are seeking the slayer of their master,—and painfully undignified. Little touches in the battle scene make it more vivid and keep her more clearly in view. And Wolfram does not forget to mention her beauty again; he realizes that this alone can explain the whole episode. In her subsequent appearances she is uniformly attractive; when it comes to the end, and she kisses Gawan farewell with tears, we feel that Wolfram has fulfilled his promise to tell an *âventiure der getriwe unt der gehiure* (404,11).

ORGELUSE

CHRETIEN

(8043) Gawain comes upon a damsel alone in a field, and admires her snow-white skin; she wears a gold band about her head. Gawan spurs toward her and she cries, "Softly, you come like a fool that exerts himself for nothing." He salutes her courteously, and asks why she has thus cried out upon him so soon; she says it is because she knew he wished to carry her off on his horse. He ad-

WOLFRAM

(508,17) Gawan sees a beautiful woman near a spring, second only to Condwiramurs in beauty; her name is Orgeluse. He salutes her and at once gives expression to his admiration. She replies very coldly that she does not desire the admiration of all people; besides, she does not know him: he had better pay court to some other woman. Gawan insists that he is hers to command. She bids him lead her away with him, but does not promise him that he will have any joy of her. Gawan is ready for service; she bids him get her palfrey

mits it and she reviles him. She will not be carried; but she will go with him if he will get her palfrey from yonder garden, and may all kinds of misfortune meet him in her company. Gawein goes to get the palfrey, passing a crowd of people who warn him in vain, ignores the threatening remarks of a large knight near by, and leads the palfrey to the damsel. He offers to help her up, but she forbids him even to touch her garments, with a perfect flood of abuse; she can mount alone, and does so. He stoops to pick up her mantle, but she forbids him to touch it, with more abuse. He is silent and they ride away, she at some distance behind him. (8266) He puts healing herbs on the wounds of a knight, who rewards him by stealing his horse and riding away with gibes and taunts, leaving him a sorry nag to ride. (8506) The damsel laughs and taunts Gawan, who mounts the poor nag (8522), which is cleverly described. So sharp are her taunts that Gawein is moved to protest mildly, but she is unmoved. They come to a river. She enters a boat and bids him enter and flee. (8640) He sees a knight coming, and she tells him who it is, exulting in his certain fall, and reminding him of the fair ladies who will watch the combat in the castle opposite. Gawan overcomes the knight and returns in triumph to the damsel, who is however no longer in sight.

out of yonder orchard. He does not know what to do with his horse; she consents to hold it, but will not touch the bridle where his hand has been. Gawan gets the horse, heedless of warnings against Orgeluse, and of prophecies of evil to himself, and leads it to her. She calls him a goose for offering to serve her, alluding to trials that await him; he offers to lift her to the saddle, but she will not bear his touch, and springs up alone. She bids him ride ahead, with a sarcastic remark. (Here Wolfram bids his hearers to suspend judgment until they know her whole story.) Gawan picks a healing herb, and she utters a gibe about knights and physicians; he tells her it is for a wounded knight, and she says: "I should like to see that; what if I learn some skill from it?" An ugly page on a sorry nag resents Gawan's being in Orgeluse's company; Gawan catches him by the hair and pulls him off his nag. The spiny hair makes Gawan's hand bleed, at which Orgeluse laughs. The wounded knight rides off on Gawan's horse. Orgeluse laughs: "First you were a knight, then you were a doctor, now you must be a varlet; would you still have my love?" Gawan answers vigorously in the affirmative. He tells Orgeluse about the wounded knight. He can but mount the poor nag now, and she laughs at his wretched plight; but he is steadfast. They come to open lists on a river-bank opposite a castle filled with fair ladies. Gawan sees a knight, and Orgeluse bids him defend himself if he can, but thinks he will be overcome, and reminds him of the fair spectators. She gets into a ferry which comes at her call, and forbids him to follow. He is grieved

Gawan asks the knight about the damsel; he says she is worse than Satan and has caused many a knight a broken head, and he advises Gawein to let her be. and asks why she is so anxious to leave him. She says it will be long before he sees her again. (536)

This is not the end of the Orgeluse story, but inasmuch as we cannot know just what Chretien did with the rest of it, we may as well omit the remainder of Wolfram's narrative.

It is hard to resist the idea, championed by several scholars, that Gawan stands in contrast to Parzival, and Orgeluse to Condwiramurs. One does not quite understand otherwise why Orgeluse is not treated like Obie; for all of Gawan's adventures could still be kept intact if that were done.

This is the more probable because Wolfram has by no means left Orgeluse as he found her. Chretien's figure reminds one very strongly of the daughter of Tiebaut, and is quite as unattractive. The moment she sees Gawein coming toward her, she shouts at him like a fish-wife; and his offers to help her are provocative of the most unladylike and intemperate abuse. Nowhere is there a single pleasing trait of character, and Gawein's devotion is quite inexplicable.

Orgeluse, on the other hand, makes a very different impression. To begin with, her beauty is dwelt upon; and we have already seen that Gawan is extremely susceptible to the charms of the fair sex. Instead of having her greet him rudely as he comes toward her, Wolfram makes Gawan address her first, as is proper in any case, and thus gives him time for his admiration of her unusual charm to take hold of him. Her first speech is not so unfavorable as to repel a prospective lover; and while it is not at all encouraging, it is wholly free of the extravagant rudeness in which Chretien's heroine indulges. There is no word of Gawan's carrying her off; and the entire conversation is on a more natural plane. When he offers to help her to mount, she forbids him, but without the gratuitous insults of Chretien's account. And throughout the entire scene Wolfram makes her sarcastic and sharp without wholly sacrificing her feminine charm. She is often witty in her sallies; and Gawan enjoys them even when they cut him.

But withal she remains a thoroughly worldly beauty, a coquette, and so makes a good mate for Gawan, the model of a successful but far from high-souled warrior and man of the world. And Orgeluse is the only example of this type, not only in Parzival, but in Wolfram.

This outline comparison leaves us with one of two alternatives: either Wolfram or the mysterious Kyot is a very much greater artist than Chretien. If Kyot, then what has become of so masterly a work as his must have been? I leave the Kyot-enthusiasts to answer the question, and prefer to think that the above comparisons show Wolfram as a remarkable artist and portrait painter.

Noteworthy is the fact that the alterations of the men are insignificant, for the most part. Wolfram was evidently satisfied with them. But we get a glimpse all through of a man, who, with all his sensuality, has a high ideal of women, and who is concerned to make his characters conform more nearly to that ideal.

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